

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of integrating a new source of supply into conducting an electronic purchasing process, the method comprising:

initiating an electronic purchasing process on a purchasing computing system having an internal contact directory of suppliers and information related to the suppliers, wherein the internal contact directory is hosted by a service provider of the purchasing computing system;
providing, as part of the initiated electronic purchasing process, a sourcing graphical user interface on a display device of the purchasing computing system, the sourcing graphical user interface having a first area to enter, as a source of supply in the electronic purchasing process, a supplier included in the internal contact directory, the sourcing graphical user interface further having a second area to initiate a search for additional suppliers not included in the internal contact directory, the second area including a listing of at least one external contact directory of suppliers, each of the at least one external contact directory being hosted by an external service provider that is not the service provider of the purchasing computing system and the internal contact directory;

upon receiving a user selection of one of the listed at least one external contact directory, establishing electronic communication, by the purchasing computing system, with [[an]] the selected external contact directory, and receiving information from the selected external contact directory to provide, on the display device of the purchasing computing system, a display of a directory of the suppliers in the selected external contact directory of suppliers and information relating to the suppliers, the external contact directory hosted by an external service provider that is not the service provider of the purchasing computing system;

upon receiving, at the purchasing computing system, a user selection of one of the suppliers included in the selected external contact directory, sending [[a]] an electronic request

from the purchasing computing system and to the selected external contact directory, the electronic request identifying ~~[[a]] the selected supplier, user-selected one of the suppliers included in the external contact directory; and in response~~ receiving, in a format compliant with a partner interface protocol; ~~[[a]] an electronic response from the external directory and at the purchasing computing system, the response including that includes predefined required information to create in the internal contact directory a contact entry for information relating to~~ the selected supplier;

~~parsing the information in the received response;~~

creating, using the information parsed from the electronic response, a new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry in the internal contact directory, the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry for the selected supplier; and

assigning the selected supplier as a source of supply in the electronic purchasing process.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said creating of the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry comprises mapping ~~[[the]]~~ parsed information from the electronic response into fields according to ~~[[the]]~~ a partner interface protocol.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the response information received from the selected external contact directory comprises an HTML page.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the response information received from the selected external contact directory comprises an XML page.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic purchasing process requires a supplier contact.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, further comprising:
completing the electronic purchasing process with the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, further comprising generating a purchase order using the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether a user who initiated and is controlling the electronic purchasing process has authority to approve the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising:
flagging the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10, further comprising:
generating a purchasing document with said new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry; and
flagging the purchasing document as on hold.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising:
determining an authorized approver for the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising:
generating an approval workflow item for the authorized approver.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising:
deleting the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry from the internal directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry.

15. (Currently Amended) An article comprising a machine-readable storage medium comprising storing processor-executable program instructions that when executed by a processor operable to cause one or more machines to perform operations of integrating a new source of supply into conducting an electronic purchasing process, the operations comprising:

initiating an electronic purchasing process on a purchasing computing system having an internal contact directory of suppliers and information related to the suppliers, wherein the internal contact directory is hosted by a service provider of the purchasing computing system;
providing, as part of the initiated electronic purchasing process, a sourcing graphical user interface on a display device of the purchasing computing system, the sourcing graphical user interface having a first area to enter, as a source of supply in the electronic purchasing process, a supplier included in the internal contact directory, the sourcing graphical user interface further having a second area to initiate a search for additional suppliers not included in the internal contact directory, the second area including a listing of at least one external contact directory of suppliers, each of the at least one external contact directory being hosted by an external service provider that is not the service provider of the purchasing computing system and the internal contact directory;
upon receiving a user selection of one of the listed at least one external contact directory, establishing electronic communication, by the purchasing computing system, with [[an]] the selected external contact directory, and therein receiving information from the selected external contact directory to provide, on the display device of the purchasing computing system, a display of a directory of the suppliers in the selected external contact directory of suppliers and information relating to the suppliers, the external contact directory hosted by an external service provider that is not the service provider of the purchasing computing system;
upon receiving, at the purchasing computing system, a user selection of one of the suppliers included in the selected external contact directory, sending [[a]] an electronic request from the purchasing computing system and to the selected external contact directory, the electronic request identifying [[a]] the selected supplier, user-selected one of the suppliers included in the external contact directory; and in response receiving, in a format compliant with a partner interface protocol, [[a]] an electronic response from the external directory and at the purchasing computing system, the response including that includes predefined required information to create in the internal contact directory a contact entry for information relating to the selected supplier;
parsing the information in the received response;

creating, using the information ~~parsed~~ from the electronic response, a new contact business-partner entry in the internal contact directory, the new contact business-partner entry for the user selected supplier; and

assigning the selected supplier as a source of supply in the electronic purchasing process.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 15, wherein said creating of the new contact business-partner entry comprises mapping [[the]] parsed information from the electronic response into fields according to a [[the]] partner interface protocol.

18. (Currently Amended) The article of claim of claim 15, wherein the information received from the selected external directory response comprises an HTML page.

19. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 15, wherein the information received from the selected external directory response comprises an XML page.

20. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 15, wherein the electronic purchasing process requires a supplier contact business-partner.

21. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 20, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:
completing the electronic purchasing process with the new contact business-partner entry.

22. (Currently Amended) The article of claim of claim 21, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising generating a purchase order using the new contact business-partner entry.

23. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 15, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

determining whether a user who initiated and is controlling the electronic purchasing process has authority to approve the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry.

24. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 23, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

flagging the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

25. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 24, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

generating a purchasing document with said new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry; and
flagging the purchasing document as on hold.

26. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 23, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

determining an authorized approver for the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry.

27. (Original) The article of claim 26, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

generating an approval workflow item for the authorized approver.

28. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 26, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

deleting the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry from the internal directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry.

29. (Currently Amended) A computing system comprising:

an internal contact directory including information relating to a plurality of suppliers
~~business-partners~~;

a network device; and

an electronic procurement computing system hosted by a service provider that also hosts the internal contact directory, the electronic procurement system operative to:

initiate an electronic purchasing process on the electronic procurement system;

provide, as part of the initiated electronic purchasing process, a sourcing graphical user interface on a display device of the electronic purchasing computing system, the sourcing graphical user interface having a first area to enter, as a source of supply in the electronic purchasing process, a supplier included in the internal contact directory, the sourcing graphical user interface further having a second area to initiate a search for additional suppliers not included in the internal contact directory, the second area including a listing of at least one external contact directory;

upon receiving a user selection of one of the listed at least one external contact directory, establish electronic communication with [[an]] the selected external contact directory, and receiving information from the selected external contact directory to provide, on the display device of the purchasing computing system, a display of a directory of the suppliers in the selected external contact directory and information relating to the suppliers, the external contact directory hosted by an external service provider that is not the service provider of the electronic procurement system;

upon receiving a user selection of one of the suppliers included in the selected external contact directory, send [[a]] an electronic request to the selected external contact directory, the electronic request identifying [[a]] the selected supplier, user-selected one of the suppliers included in the external contact directory; and in response receive, in a format compliant with a partner interface protocol, [[a]] an electronic response from the external directory, the response including that includes predefined information to create in the internal contact directory a contact entry for information relating to the selected supplier;

parse the information in the received response;

create, using the information parsed from the electronic response, a new contact business partner entry in the internal contact directory, the new contact business partner entry for the selected supplier; and

assign the selected supplier as a source of supply in the in the electronic purchasing process.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 29, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to map [[the]] parsed information from the electronic response into fields according to [[the]] a partner interface protocol.

32. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 29, wherein the information received from the selected external contact directory response comprises an HTML page.

33. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 29, wherein the information received from the selected external contact directory response comprises an XML page.

34. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 29, wherein the electronic purchasing process requires a supplier contact business-partner.

35. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 34, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to:
complete the electronic purchasing process with the new contact business-partner entry.

36. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 35, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:
generate a purchase order using the new contact business-partner entry.

37. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 29, further comprising:
determine whether a user who initiated and is controlling the electronic purchasing process has authority to approve the new contact business-partner entry.

38. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 37, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to:

flag the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

39. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 38, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to:

generate a purchasing document with said new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry; and
flag the purchasing document as on hold.

40. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 34, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to:

determine an authorized approver for the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry.

41. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 40, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to:

generate an approval workflow item for the authorized approver.

42. (Currently Amended) The computing system of claim 40, wherein the electronic procurement computing system is further operative to:

delete the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry from the internal contact directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new contact ~~business-partner~~ entry.